

CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

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FROM: The Secretariat

February 10, 1977

Implementation of the Recommendations of
the CGIAR Review Committee

Attached is the final version of the Secretariat paper outlining actions to be taken to implement the recommendations of the CGIAR Review Committee. There have been only minor editorial changes from the draft version circulated to Center Directors and Board Chairmen on December 13, 1976.

Attachment

Distribution:

Center Directors
Center Board Chairmen
TAC Secretariat

Implementation of the Recommendations of the
CGIAR Review Committee

1. The CGIAR Secretariat outlines below its suggestions to Center Directors for implementation of the recommendations of the CGIAR Review Committee, which were approved by the Group on October 27-28, 1976.

Recommendations 1-3 (Need for the CGIAR; Emphasis on Foodcrops; Period of Consolidation)

2. No specific action by Centers immediately required.

Recommendation 4 (Forum Function)

3. The CG Secretariat has identified several alternatives regarding the possible structure, timing, subject matter, participation and other aspects of forum discussions sponsored by the CGIAR. It will shortly be seeking comments and suggestions from a representative number of members of the Group, Center Directors, TAC members and others. A specific proposal will then be formulated before mid-March 1977.

Recommendation 5 (Integrated Programs)

4. The Group expects the international centers to conceive of their broad range of activities as an integrated program, regardless of type of funding or location of activity. The recommendation is that centers do away with the artificial distinctions between different aspects of a center's program. It is aimed primarily at the special project activity, and in effect urges a center (and its donors) to develop all its activities within the context of an agreed integrated, coherent program.

5. The practical effect of this recommendation may be that an international center should accept new "special project" activity only when it is consistent with its integrated program as it may be developed within the guidelines described in Recommendation 6 below.

6. A corollary to this recommendation is that the entire program of a center may henceforth be subject to review by the Group.

7. Centers are requested to ensure that their 1978 Program and Budget papers provide adequate detail on the nature of all on-going and prospective special projects, and their relationship to the overall mandate and program of the center.

Recommendation 6 (Program Balance)

Recommendation 10 (Longer-term Planning)

Recommendation 16 (Center Size)

Recommendation 18 (TAC Review)

These four recommendations are inter-related.

8. The Group generally believes that the international centers should be more explicit in setting their longer-term research objectives, deter-

mining the appropriate balance of activities, and assessing their optimal size in relation to their mandate and research program.

9. Most centers have a short-term mechanism of forward planning, through annual program reviews and other methods. However, apart from one or two centers, there appears to be little specific longer-term planning, which translates the center's mandate into specific research strategy and objectives.

10. In particular, the Secretariat believes the Group would wish to have the centers develop: (i) an explicit statement of objectives and a longer-term research strategy; (ii) a justification for the balance of program activities among research, training, conferences, etc., and -- at multiple-crop centers -- for the split of resources among different crops or systems work; (iii) an assessment of where the impact of the research is likely to be felt initially and in succeeding stages, and what changes in emphasis, if any, are envisaged over a five-year period; and (iv) some assessment of what the centers believe is their appropriate size, in terms of staff, given their program objectives.

11. The Secretariat believes that it will take time to develop a rationale for program choice, balance and size. Perhaps the best approach would be to ask centers to prepare a statement on these questions in preparation for TAC Quinquennial Reviews. It could then form part of the review exercise. For those centers which have already been reviewed, or which are not scheduled for a Review for the next 18 months, a separate timetable could be devised. Ideally, all centers will have developed a statement on program objectives, strategies, size and balance by the end of 1978.

Recommendation 7 (Links with National Programs)

12. The "boundaries" question continues to be of special interest to donors. The Group generally endorsed the recommendation of the Review Committee, including its breakdown of "appropriate" and "inappropriate" activities of the centers in cooperation with national research programs as outlined on Page 82 of the Report.

13. It is suggested that the 1978 Program and Budget papers, in describing the special project activity as proposed under Recommendation 5, should refer to the definitions of appropriate activity given in the Report. If there are any special projects which appear to fall in the "inappropriate" category, explicit justification should be given for their continuation.

Recommendation 8 (Definition of Core/Extra-core)

14. The Study Team working on the Review noted that the distinction between a Center's core program and its program of Special Projects was often made arbitrarily in accordance with the source of funding rather than on the merits of whether an activity was central and critical to carrying out the Center's mandate as distinct from being supplementary

or ancillary. The Review Committee's report sought to clarify the concepts and Recommendation 8 made a specific proposal about the terminology for different kinds of funding.

15. The discussion in the Consultative Group on this item reached the conclusion that while a Center's program should be presented and considered as an integrated whole, it was valid to distinguish between that part of it which was central and critical and that which was supplementary and usually short term with limited objectives and often for a single client rather than the Center's clientele as a whole. The most recent version of the CGIAR Budgeting and Accounting Procedures Paper (February 25, 1976) lays down definitions of "core program" and "special projects" which are consistent with this concept and these definitions therefore remain valid.

16. There remains, however, the problem identified by the Study Team that these definitions are sometimes distorted or even abused to accommodate a donor's desire to designate an activity it is funding as a "special project" even when it properly forms part of a Center's core program. Efforts should now be made to phase out this practice and as a step in that direction the Secretariat will shortly circulate a proposed change in the terminology for distinguishing between funds of three different kinds: (a) those available without restriction for a Center's core program, (b) those restricted to designated parts of the core program and (c) those restricted to supplementary or ancillary activities. Funds of the first and second character provided by a member of the CGIAR would be counted as part of the donor's "pledge" to the CGIAR regardless of their budgetary source and funds of the third character would, as at present, fall outside the CGIAR arrangements for "pledged" funds; the activities financed by them would, as heretofore, be termed "special projects" but in future would be reasonably fully described in Center Program and Budget Papers and their relevance to the core program explained.

Recommendation 9 (Special Project Review)

17. As indicated above, the Group wishes to have more information and scrutiny of those aspects of a center's program which are financed outside the core budget, but which form part of a center's integrated program.

18. The Recommendation proposes that TAC review any special project activity which might be deemed to (i) be outside a center's major objectives, (ii) strain the center's management, (iii) eventually be recommended for core support or, (iv) be unusually large. These are questions of judgment and interpretation. What is needed is a single test for deciding when to bring a proposed special project to TAC in advance of becoming committed to it. The Secretariat suggests, therefore, that the international centers routinely advise the Secretariat in January of each year (at the time they are to advise of any new core program initiatives) whether there are any prospective special projects which might eventually be suitable for the core program, or will cost \$250,000 per year, or both. These activities could be reviewed by TAC in connection with its annual core program dis-

cussion. If a Center wished to move more quickly on a project than waiting until January would allow, it could advise the TAC Chairman in writing at any time, with copies to each of the Secretariats.

19. In addition to this process of advising the two Secretariats, the Center's Program and Budget Paper submission should explain the objectives of every special project, the manner in which progress is to be assessed, and the number of man-days of center core staff needed to carry out the project, in addition to information on the financial and man-year cost of the special project itself.

20. It should be emphasized that it is not the desire of the Group or TAC to "approve" special project activity. It is rather a desire to ensure that a center's program is an integrated, coherent whole.

Recommendation 11 (Inter-Center Collaboration)

21. This recommendation is self-explanatory.

22. Centers are requested to provide the Secretariat with a copy of any inter-center agreements which have been concluded. Any agreements entered into henceforth should also be copied routinely to the Secretariat.

23. The Program and Budget submissions might also highlight cooperative activities.

Recommendation 12 (Board Composition)

24. The Chairmen of the Boards of Trustees of the international centers are asked to bring this recommendation to the attention of their Boards at the next scheduled Board meeting.

25. The Secretariat would appreciate receiving statements of criteria and procedures for the selection of Board members, to the extent they are not already contained in the Articles or By-Laws of the center.

26. For those centers which do not now have Board members selected in conjunction with the CGIAR, the Secretariat would appreciate receiving a statement from the Board indicating whether the Board accepts this proposal in principle, and what steps would need to be taken to carry out this recommendation. If such action would create legal difficulties, this should be indicated.

Recommendation 13 (Staff Recruitment/Development)

27. In carrying out its field investigations, the CG Study Team gained the impression that several aspects of staff recruitment and development required attention. Recognizing that the quality of any institution depends on the quality of its staff, the Study Team and the Review Committee wished to bring these suggestions to the attention of Center Directors. The Review Report, particularly pp. 92-94, identifies specific activities regarding recruitment and staff development which the Group suggests the

Center Directors address, individually and collectively.

28. The Secretariat suggests that the spokesman for the Center Directors make a presentation to the Group at International Centers Week outlining any steps which are being taken by centers to implement these suggestions.

Recommendation 15 (TAC Research Program Reviews)

Recommendation 18 (TAC Forward Plan Reviews)

29. Center Directors will note that TAC is asked to continue its quinquennial review evaluation, to assess future center research plans, and to undertake cross-center analyses of specific topics.

30. TAC will also be responsible for reviewing the longer-term program plan described under Recommendation 6 above.

31. Center Directors are asked to note particularly the final sentence of Recommendation 18 regarding the period of consolidation of the CG network which is to follow.

Recommendation 17 (Biennial Budgets)

32. The Secretariat has circulated a paper describing, among other changes stemming from the Review, the procedures for biennial budgeting.

33. Three or four centers have been selected to initiate the biennial budget process for the 1978 Program and Budget submission. These centers have already been notified.

34. The Budgeting and Accounting Paper will be revised before the 1979 budget cycle begins in early 1978.

Recommendation 19 (Donor Action)

35. Center Directors will wish to note particularly items (4) and (5) of this recommendation which encourages donors not to overfund a center and which calls for a CG review of a center which is consistently underfunded.

Recommendation 20 (Standby Committee)

36. The Group authorized the Chairman of the CG to select and activate the Standby Committee as needed. No such action will be required in 1977.

Recommendation 21 (Joint Secretariat Activity)

37. The CG and TAC Secretariats plan to produce integrated program and budget commentaries for each center in 1977, and a joint Integrative Report.

38. The draft commentaries will be sent to the Center Directors as early

as possible and reviewed with them during the May/June TAC meeting.

39. Suggestions on the coverage of the program descriptions in the 1978 Program and Budget submissions have been circulated to Centers with the proposals on biennial budgeting.

Recommendation 22 (Cash Flow)

40. Most donors appear to be able to accelerate their contributions in 1977. Arrangements have been made with the World Bank to provide limited short-term accommodation where necessary. Specific instructions for access to these standby funds have been circulated to the Centers by the Secretariat.

CGIAR REVIEW COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: *The need for a sustained research effort to increase food availability in developing countries will continue and is likely to increase. Therefore, we recommend that the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research proceed on the basis that it should continue to function for the foreseeable future (pp. 58-60).*

Recommendation 2: *We recommend that the CGIAR should continue to endorse TAC's conclusion that the primary focus of the CGIAR should be to support research and technology development that can potentially increase food production in the food-deficit countries of the world. The research activities supported by the CGIAR are appropriately focused on food commodities which are widely consumed and collectively represent the majority of the food sources of the developing world and no major changes or additions are called for at this time (pp. 61-63).*

Recommendation 3: *We recommend that the next three years should be viewed by the CGIAR as a period of consolidation. During this period continued support should be provided for the current set of centers and related activities. We caution against undertaking initiatives requiring major financial commitments. TAC should continue during this period of consolidation to explore the need for new initiatives and changes in existing programs (pp. 61-74).*

Recommendation 4: *In addition to the current practice of receiving reports from related activities such as IFDC, IFPRI, AVRDC, and CGFPI, we recommend that the CGIAR should support fora for information exchange among members of the Group, technical personnel from their agencies, centers, other aid agencies and national programs in developing countries.*

In this connection the CGIAR should consider two specific activities (1) commissioning papers as a basis for discussions of CGIAR issues of interest to donors and research beneficiaries and (2) explicitly seeking to foster increased information exchange among CGIAR donors and related agencies about other activities in which they are jointly involved (pp. 61-63).

Recommendation 5: *We recommend that all projects undertaken by a center be regarded as components of its total integrated program regardless of sources of funds and that the entire program be subject to the review procedure as outlined in this report (pp. 75-76).*

Recommendation 6: *We recommend that each center develop an objective set of criteria for program choice and periodically reassess the balance of its program with respect to: (1) research and technology development, (2) training, (3) cooperation with national programs and advanced research institutions; and (4) communication and exchange of information between center scientists and others in related fields (pp. 76-79).*

Recommendation 7: *We recommend that centers continue to develop and strengthen their cooperation with national programs, insofar as this is essential to accomplish their research mandate. Beyond this centers should remain alert and responsive to additional opportunities for cooperation to the extent that extra-core funds are available, that these activities do not compromise or distort the central research mission of the center and that they are within the centers' capacity to staff and manage (pp. 79-84).*

Recommendation 8: We recommend that all support to a center other than that provided through the CGIAR be classified as extra-core funding.

Further, we recommend that these funds be used to supplement activities supported by core funds and/or to finance activities that the center may wish to undertake primarily to benefit a particular country (pp. 84-86).

Recommendation 9: We recommend that any proposal for a new project to be supported by extra-core funds should be forwarded by the center to TAC for review when (1) there is a question as to whether the purpose of the activity lies within the center's mandate, (2) acceptance has implications for future core support, (3) the proposed activity might put undue additional strain on center management, or (4) the extra-core funding is particularly large (pp. 84-86).

Recommendation 10: We recommend that all centers develop more effective forward research program planning procedures and include as advisors international scientists with competence in the appropriate areas (pp. 88-89).

Recommendation 11: We recommend that centers should be encouraged to collaborate wherever possible in executing their cooperative research activities with national programs when working in the same region or with the same commodity. The negotiation and administration of these linkages should be the responsibility of center directors and the respective boards of trustees. TAC or the CGIAR should serve only to advise and assist in reaching a solution in the case of disputes that cannot be resolved by the centers. Further, we recommend that agreements and arrangements between centers be formally recorded in writing and a copy of all such agreements be sent to the CGIAR Secretariat (pp. 89-90).

Recommendation 12: We recommend that each board of trustees define criteria and procedures for the selection and appointment of its own members and that these be made available to the CGIAR. Further, we recommend that each board of trustees broaden its membership by including, when appropriate and consistent with national laws, three members selected in conjunction with and ratified by the CGIAR (pp. 91-92).

Recommendation 13: Since quality of the staff is a central factor in the success of the program, we recommend that: (1) center directors advertise as widely and openly as possible in seeking candidates for staff positions, (2) every effort be made to maintain staff vitality, and (3) outposted staff receive the same sabbatical privileges as staff posted at headquarters regardless of source of funds supporting the scientist (pp. 92-94).

Recommendation 14: We recommend that the CGIAR review its overall program and operation every three to five years. The CGIAR should appoint an ad hoc committee to conduct a review of the substantive program of the CGIAR as well as review those policies, procedures, and management mechanisms which require attention. TAC should provide a major input into this long term forward look at the substantive program (pp. 96-98).

Recommendation 15: We recommend continuation of the TAC quinquennial reviews for evaluation of scientific quality, scope, and balance of current programs, and to evaluate future plans, including explicit review of center proposals to continue projects of long standing. We also recommend that the TAC give greater emphasis to periodic, across center analysis of particular topics (stripe analysis) (pp. 96-98).

Recommendation 16: We recommend that the concept of a desirable size range for centers be adopted. We further recommend that centers be asked to propose their desired size based on the number of senior scientists translated into financial terms. Until these plans are developed, we recommend that any proposed increase in senior staff numbers that would take centers above the size of the largest existing centers should be closely scrutinized (pp. 86-87 and 98-100).

Recommendation 17: We recommend that a biennial budget cycle be adopted for centers and related activities. In addition, a further indicative plan for the two years beyond the biennium should be developed. These budgets and indicative plans to be developed by centers should be consistent with their proposed desired size (pp. 98-100).

Recommendation 18: We recommend that the desired size and indicative plan proposals from centers be reviewed by TAC. TAC should make appropriate recommendations to the CGIAR, after the discussion of any proposed adjustments with the centers. The CGIAR approved plans would then form the guidelines for the preparation of the center's next biennial budget. Until this process is in operation, centers should recognize that proposals for budget increases will be reviewed very carefully in the spirit of our recommended period of consolidation (pp. 98-100).

Recommendation 19: We recommend that within the framework of the following guidelines, donor autonomy be preserved and that center budgets result from the sum of independent donor decisions. The guidelines are: (1) donors be encouraged to increase the flexibility of their pledges, (2) donors be encouraged to continue support for a reasonable period of time to allow centers to produce research results, (3) donors be encouraged to precede

any substantial reduction in support by two years' notice, (4) that donors agree to cooperate to assure that no center or other CGIAR supported activity receives greater support than its budget request, including supplemental requests, and (5) donor(s) of last resort fund a center that is seriously underfunded, but if that situation continues for two or three years the future of the center should be reviewed by the CGIAR (pp. 100-101).

Recommendation 20: We recommend that a standby committee of the CGIAR be authorized. Its membership should include the chairman of the TAC and the executive secretary. We suggest the committee stand ready to advise on how the Group should deal with significant shortfalls in funding. The committee could also be activated by the CGIAR or the Chairman of the CGIAR for advice should other policy issues or circumstances arise (pp. 101-102).

Recommendation 21: We recommend that steps be taken to ensure closer coordination between the TAC and CGIAR secretariats to enable them to jointly produce integrated program and budget analysis for the CGIAR. Certain additional points of organization and procedure should be agreed upon:

- (1) Adequate staff and financial resources must be provided for the work of each of the secretariats.
- (2) The co-sponsors should report to the Group at its July meeting on the budgets of the secretariats for the coming year. If sufficient resources cannot be provided by them, donors should be asked to make additional funds available.

- (3) Each secretariat should recognize that it reports only to the Group, through its respective chairman.

We further recommend that the co-sponsors report to the Group at the forthcoming meeting (October 1976) whether they foresee any difficulty in meeting these considerations (pp. 102-103).

Recommendation 22: We recommend that donors be strongly encouraged to provide their pledged funds as early in the fiscal year as possible.

Further, we recommend that the CGIAR Secretariat provide donors and centers with a time schedule of center budgetary needs and availability of donors' funds. If these two mechanisms do not solve the cash flow problem, we recommend that the World Bank explore alternative solutions (pp. 103-104).